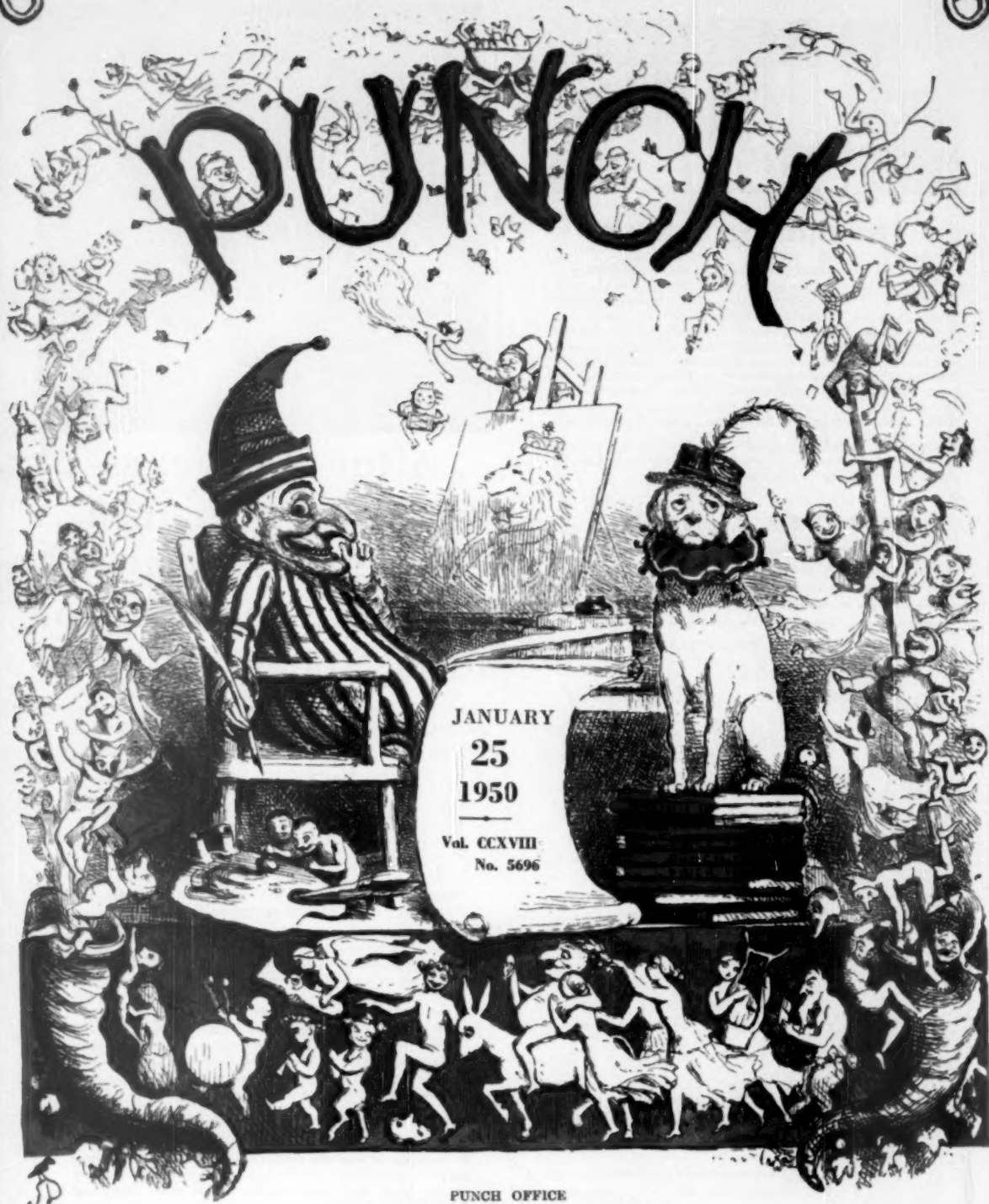
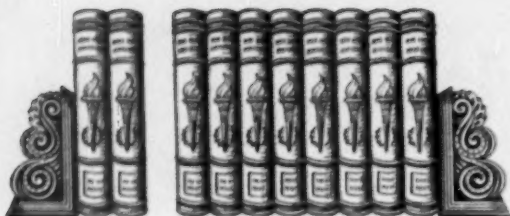


6^d

PUNCH or THE LONDON CHARTER—WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25 1950

6^d

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The missing volume

ONE of the most important volumes in the Social History of England has — so far as our knowledge goes — yet to be written. It will deal with the Twentieth Century Housewife and the way her life has been transformed by the introduction of scientific labour-saving devices. Naturally enough, this is a subject of the greatest interest to Hoover Limited, since it is difficult to believe that in this Twentieth Century any two mechanical appliances have done more to ease the lot of the housewife than the Hoover Cleaner and the Hoover Electric Washing Machine. Nor should it be forgotten that Hoover F.H.P. Motors are used in many other domestic appliances.

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Barneys has taught
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Ideal Smoking"

This fine appreciation came from a late-night working London Architect who confesses to a weekly average of 8 ozs. . . . sometimes even more.

"As a pipe-smoker of seventeen years' standing I have had
"fourteen years of constant changes in Tobacco and the
"last three years with Barneys. The first period was one of constant
"sore tongue and parched throat, the last three years have taught me
"the meaning of ideal smoking.

"Perhaps I may be termed a moderately heavy smoker, for,
"starting with a pipe during the morning shave, I continue fairly
"regularly through the day—and I finish my last pipe in bed; thus
"consuming a normal ration of eight ounces per week.

"At times I have smoked more than this, when working at all
"hours of the night—or all night. On architectural competitions I
"smoke continuously and have in this way got through over two
"ounces within a period of twenty-four hours, but can confidently
"state that even on such occasions there has been not the slightest
"trace of burnt tongue or sore palate.

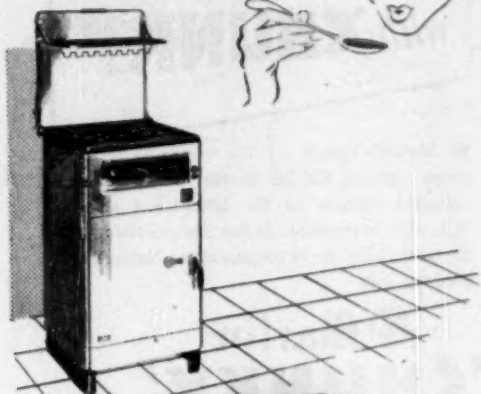
"At an all day and night smoke there is—in my opinion—no
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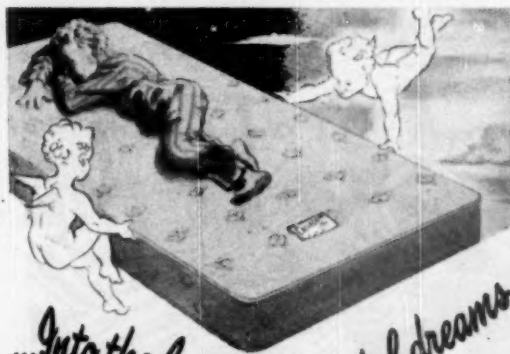
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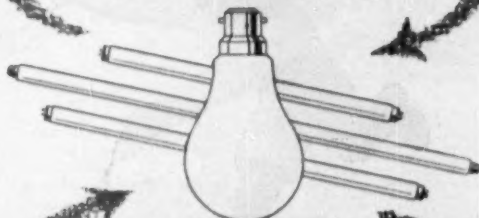
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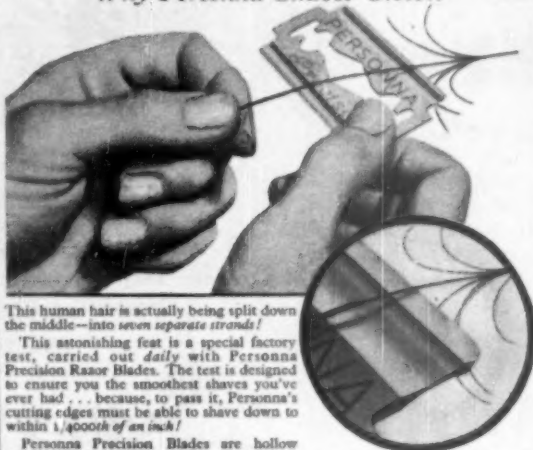
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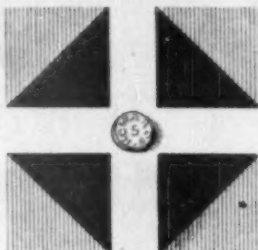
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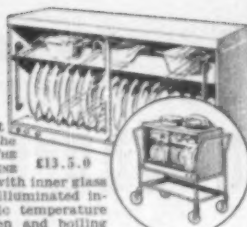
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DISPRIN is recommended
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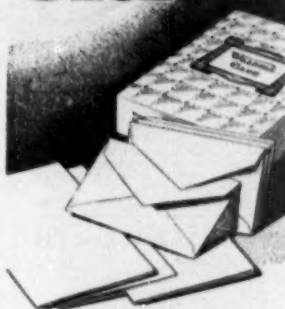
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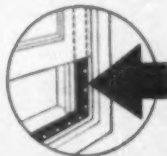
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Prevention of Damage by Pests
Act, 1949
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Prevention of Damage by Pests
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ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS.

PART I.

RATS AND MICE.

- Section
1. Local authorities for the purposes of Part I.
 2. Duties of local authorities.
 3. Obligation of occupiers of land to notify local authority of rats and mice.
 4. Power of local authority to require action.
 5. Remedies for failure to comply with notice under s. 4.
 6. Additional powers of local authorities in relation to groups of premises.
 7. Recovery of expenses under s. 5 or s. 6.
 8. Provisions as to threshing and dismantling of ricks.
 9. Power of local authority to require information as to interests in land.
 10. Authentication of documents, service of notices, etc.
 11. Eschequer grants to local authorities.
 12. Powers of Minister with respect to functions of local authorities.

PART II.

INFESTATION OF FOOD.

13. Obligation of certain undertakers to give notice of occurrence of infestation.
14. Power of Minister to give directions to certain undertakers for preventing or mitigating infestation.
15. Appeal against directions under s. 14.
16. Powers of Minister in case of failure to comply with directions.
17. Offences against Part II.
18. Power of Minister to delegate to local authorities.

The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act (1949), which comes into force on March 31st, 1950, makes it the responsibility of individual occupiers and management to clear premises infested by rats, mice and insect pests, or report their presence to their Local Authority—but it will still remain the duty of the owner or occupier to clear his premises.

It is in your own interests to ACT NOW by ensuring that your premises have been cleared by the time this Act comes into operation.

The Ratin Service is the largest commercial organisation of its kind in the country. The employment by the Ratin Service of the latest scientific methods means that the natural cunning and suspicions of rats and mice are defeated, thus whole colonies are wiped out.

Write TO-DAY for our new folder explaining your responsibility under the Act and giving details of how the Ratin Service can clear your premises and keep them clear.

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. . . at age 65, or on previous death, may be assured now. The normal annual premium for a man aged 30 next birthday is £125.12.6.

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What is a burglar's first move?

BEFORE starting operations in any district, burglars engage in quiet reconnaissance to select the houses or flats on which they will call later. A decisive factor is the presence—or absence—of a lock that looks 'easy.'

Can you rely on your locks?

If you are at all doubtful, it would be a wise precaution to replace them *now* with sturdy, burglar-baffling Chubb locks. Behind these locks is the Chubb world-wide reputation as makers of safes and strong-rooms to the great National Banks.

Chubb Security is an economical investment. The range of locks includes, for example, the unpickable 6 lever Mortice Locking Latch (3L91) at 62/6. Call at your ironmonger's today and ask to see this wonderful new Chubb lock.

An illustrated folder, 'Boom in Burglary—and the Answer', will be sent to you immediately on request. Chubb & Son's Lock & Safe Co. Ltd., 40-42 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

View from inside door of Chubb Mortice Locking Latch (3L91).

In bronze or chromium finish.



FIT CHUBB LOCKS NOW—FOR SAFETY



CHARIVARIA

An election agent says that many feminine volunteers for clerical work at the campaign committee rooms can't use a typewriter. Of course it's hopeless if they can't even manage "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the Party."



Try this Over on Your Abacus

"Ethiopia, still using the old Italian Calendar, has eight more years to go before celebrating the turn of the century, says A. P." *Evening paper*

Hot on the heels of the report that Salvador Dali recently completed a film dealing with a love-affair between a girl and a wheelbarrow comes the news that a play by Picasso is to be presented in London. It is called *Desire Caught by the Tail* and contains characters with names like Fat Anguish, Skinny Anguish, Big Foot and Onion. Rumours are already abroad that Sir Alfred Munnings intends to counter-attack with an adaptation of *Black Beauty* in blank verse.

E

"All Set for the Slanging Match," says a headline on the coming election. Even some of the mildest candidates expect to get a little cross.

"Wick Radio, Jan. 13.—Following received from British trawler Huddersfield Town at 1.46 p.m., G. M. T.: Heard one of officers of steam trawler Reptonian on board smack GIRL JEAN."

"Lloyd's List"

She'd been asking for it.



Explosive scarecrows are to be used to drive the birds away from a Birmingham airport. The authorities will be kept informed of the smooth running of the scheme by means of a series of reports.

Silver, looted by the Nazis from families in countries occupied by them during the war, and now on exhibition in New York, will be returned free of charge to the owners if they can identify their own property. There is no mention of a free return ticket across the Atlantic.

85

According to an American expert, "flying saucers" seen some time ago were the vehicles of intelligences observing us from another planet. That they were intelligences of a high order is proved by the fact that they've never bothered to come back.

The great majority of people who set out to learn to play the piano are said to give it up quite soon. Their neighbours must often wonder whether their Czerny was really necessary.



Some visiting elevens, says a soccer writer, are given a very poor reception. Still, the individual players often get a good send-off.

No Puppetry!

"Handel's 'Messiah,'—Part I., together with a chorus from Bach's 'Christmas Oratorio,' will be sung by the All Saints' Special Choir on Wednesday, January 11th, at 7 p.m. Kenneth Turner will conduct; Dr. Harold Darke, supported by strings, will be at the organ."

Parish magazine

EARLY SPRING

I WHO have loved you
twice a thousand ways
(though my life's fleeting
so changeable you are,
my sweeting,
from moment to moment variable
as a star),
am in a maze:
I thought that I had proved you
in ev'ry mood
that all your lovers knew
whose tongues do tell
how you
can, on an impulse, weep and turn away
from the most golden day
of April, or suddenly snatch up from the grey
sad lap of February, and weave and wear
in your bright hair

blue, unexpected violets for a snood.
Sweet, sweetest sweet,
but what have you now done?
O reckless one,
on too advent'rous feet
have you not trespassed on the grim domain
of two-faced Janus? What had you to gain
by this mad whim?

Yet I'll not grudge it him
if in revenge he should
lay waste your lands
to the edge of May's green wood:
I have kissed hands,
I am your courtier true,
and, greensleeves Spring, or fall it ill or good
I'll share your lot with you.

R. C. SCRIVEN

NEW HOPE FOR MR. CUBE

TO recap—

"I see," Mr. Herbert Morrison said, "that the lord who rules over Mr. Cube has declared his determination to go on with his more-than-ever doubtful campaign. We have," he went on, "given Mr. Cube's owner and other interests the best advice we could, and if they and the Tory party are determined to play the fool, they must shoulder such consequences as may come to them."

The lord who rules over Mr. Cube said "I suppose I should be grateful to Mr. Morrison, but I much prefer the advice of Lord Simon and Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe," adding that it was the elementary right of every British citizen to state his case when attacked.

The advice of Lord Simon was that expenditure undertaken to promote a general policy as such would not be within the law restraining expenditure of third parties. The advice of Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe was that industries which are conducting anti-nationalization campaigns are entitled to protect themselves.

Mr. Morrison says, in effect, that he does not agree with either Lord Simon or Sir David.

It is quite possible, therefore, that soon after the General Election

all those members whose policy agrees with that of the lord who rules over Mr. Cube will find themselves unseated and a great number of by-elections will have to be fought. During this fresh campaign it may be (if Mr. Morrison is right) that Mr. Cube will be compelled to suppress his views. But, unless the average householder gets through his sugar much faster than I do, it is likely that this pernicious anti-nationalization propaganda will still be lurking in larders all over the country, so that its cost must still be charged to Tory candidates' election expenses, and successful candidates again unseated; and this process may go on and on until the total amount spent on anti-nationalization propaganda, when equally spread out among all the elections and by-elections from 23rd February onwards, has reached a low enough figure to allow any Tory candidates still elected to retain their seats.

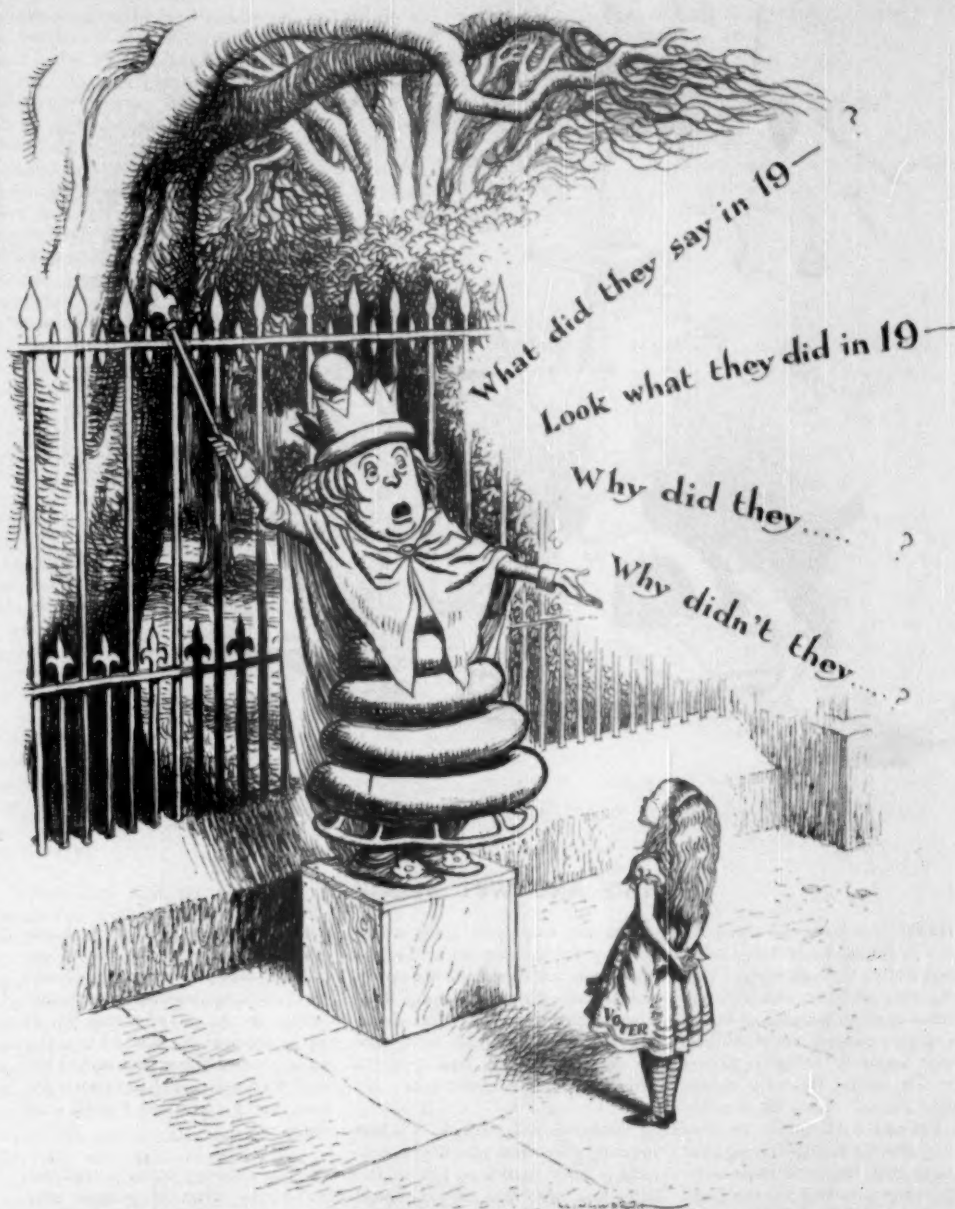
There is, however, a very simple solution to this impasse. A public-spirited citizen must stand, for what constituency doesn't matter, as an Independent Anti-Nationalizationist. He need have no programme except anti-nationalization, and he should explicitly repudiate all other parties' even if they also oppose nationalization. He can then claim

that Mr. Cube and the other funny little figures who symbolize a dislike for state control are all operating for him. He need incur no other election expenses, but should cheerfully admit that everything spent on little figures is designed to secure his election, his and no other, since there is no one else in his party or with exactly his "platform."

Should he be elected he will of course be unseated with ease, and to avoid unnecessary inconvenience he should stand for a constituency where victory for a pro-nationalization candidate is pretty certain.

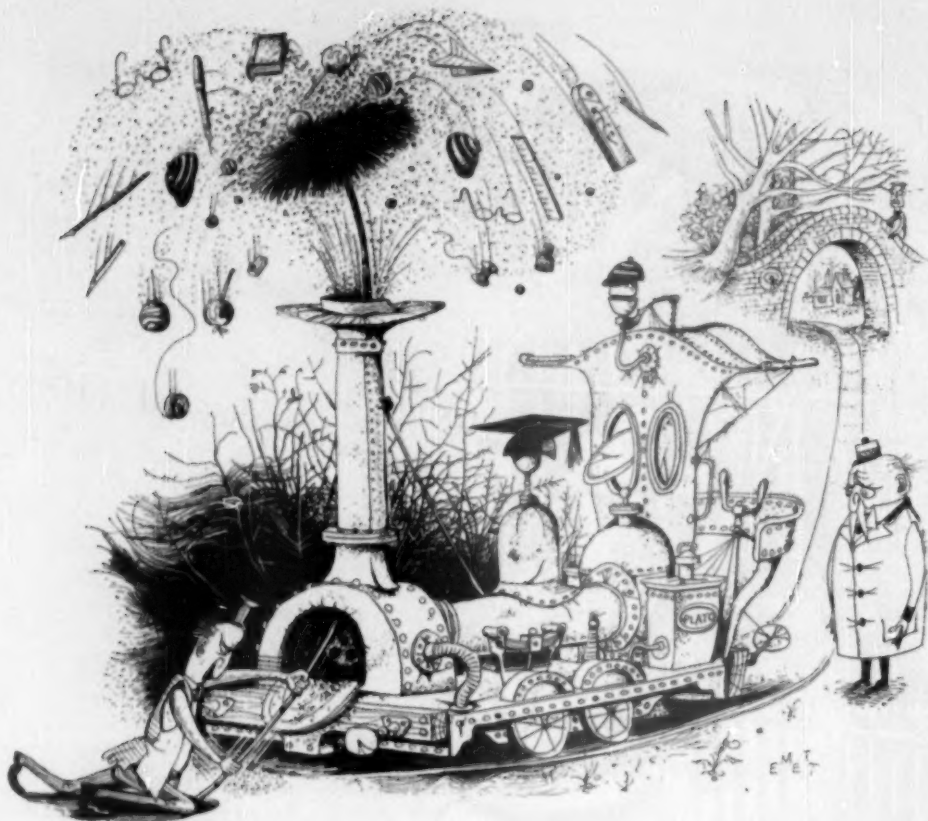
Suitably sponsored, I would willingly undertake this service myself. If I do so, I shall enter the lists, probably in fancy dress, under the sobriquet of "Mr. Expenses," in order to ensure nation-wide attention, and I shall expect, in return for my public spirit, to be handsomely rewarded by the lords who rule over the industries whose interests I have served. They can, of course, openly label such rewards as election expenses, since the worst they can expect (politically speaking) is that I shall be unseated, and that is inevitable in any case; and, what is more, there need be no limit to the amount they allocate for this purpose.

B. A. YOUNG



THE VOTER IN WONDERLAND

II. THE POINTLESS POST MORTEM or "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards."



"Thank goodness the kids have finally gone back to school . . . !"

WHIPS AND WET SPONGES

THERE is a man who stands on the platform of a certain Underground station through which I pass during wet rush hours who probably provokes as much resentment as any man in this country could well do without anybody actually having voted for him. He only shouts "Hurry along!" like a lot of other men, but with a difference. He does it while leaning negligently against a railing that the authorities have thoughtfully provided on the platform to break the crowd up and slow it down and support the weight of a man bawling "Hurry along!" The effect is as if, during the hour

which my employers allow me at midday for leaning on scaffolding poles and watching men dig up the road, I were to call to them "Look alive there!" or "Let's get cracking!", the big difference being that no one has hit this man over the head with a stone mallet yet.

Someone will, though, one wet morning—someone who happens to have a stone mallet on him at the time and who has already been scolded out of bed by alarm bells, told the time every few minutes over the radio, startled by the convulsive movements of station clocks and

bullied into step by brass bands playing "Dixie." The man I am talking about, the slave-driver based on the railings, is standing, or rather lolling, at the end of a long line of petty annoyances, and he is going to be the last straw that breaks the mallet's handle. I shall be sorry for him, but I am afraid I shall soon cheer up.

The unhappy truth is that the well-known class of persons who cannot bear the sight of other people taking it easy has now an excellent excuse for being more vexatious than ever. The voice of duty is

urging the nation to pull its socks up to new and unfashionable heights, and the goaders, the Simon Legrees, the wielders of wet sponges in the small hours, will not fail to answer the call. They will be at the back, shouting, clapping their hands, telling us the time and playing records of "Blaze Away." They will tear the bed-clothes off us in the name of patriotism and push us from behind for the sake of the export trade. They will thunder on bathroom doors, not because they want to get in but because time is money and money is two point eight to the pound.

The worst of it is that these people have had their scope immeasurably increased by the inventions of modern science: they have taken to hurrying us along with a microphone. To be nagged in the privacy of the home by one's immediate circle of family and friends is bad enough, but to be nagged by a complete stranger from somewhere up near the roof of an enormous railway station through a loudspeaker of goodness-knows-how-many-watts' undistorted output is considerably worse. The wattage is so much greater, to begin with. Practically no family circle has an output of more than four or five watts. And there is no answering back, none of this locking oneself in an empty room and having one's say, as at home. The thing is almost unbearable.

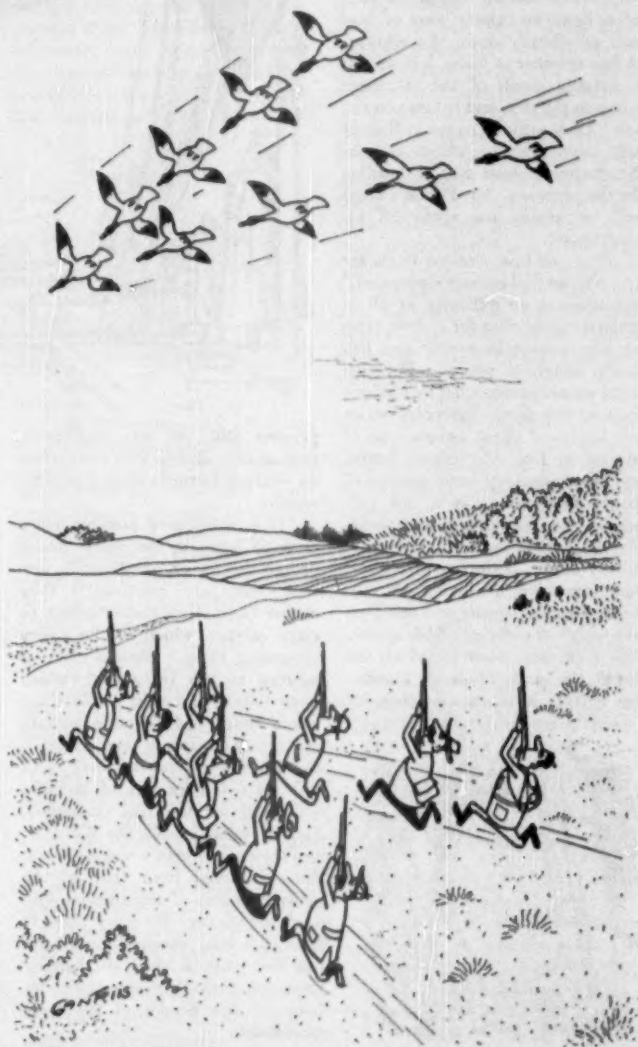
It is clear that the travelling public can do little to combat this technique of mass nagging. It is an entirely different proposition from the persecution by the private, or untrained, slave-driver of the lying-in-bed public, the leisurely-shaving public, the substantial-breakfast-eating public and others, which has been going on for so long now that most sufferers know, at least in theory, the sort of action that should be taken to counter it. In these cases if the stone mallet, with reinforced handle, is not available the bedside chair or old Army boot will serve. But against professionals, many of them hiding behind loud-speakers, one is powerless.

There is, however, one possible consolation. Anyone who has studied the history of any branch of activity in which the requisite skills and proficiencies have been developed sufficiently by generations of craftsmen knows that there comes a time when the professional practitioner steps in and takes over, with a consequent decline in status and numbers of the amateur. Can it be that what we are witnessing

is the beginning of the end of the amateur nagger? Are we paying, could we pay, too high a price for that?

EXPLANATION

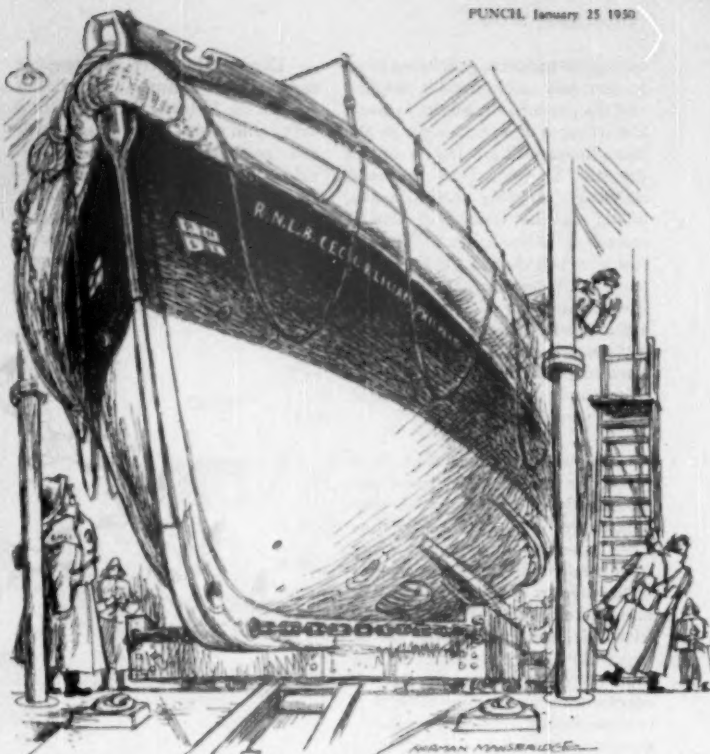
I CAN tell you why the dodo
Has passed from land and sea:
He lived *suaviter in modo*,
Not *fortiter in re*.



ELEVEN LIVES A WEEK

THE Cecil and Lilian Philpott sits very solidly in her cradle, the way you see her in the picture. With the tall ladder beside her you might think she had been set up there permanently for exhibition purposes or as some sort of memorial. But it is the work of a moment to cast off those chains; and then the touch of a hand on a lever will tilt her forward hydraulically, cradle and all, and at one blow of a hammer twenty tons of boat will go silently down the slipway. A fine smother of foam, followed by a surging climb of the stemhead towards the sky, and before you can say "Do it again" Coxswain Harvey will have spun his wheel, and the Newhaven lifeboat will be heading for the open sea. Mr. Punch's artist will be wiping the spray off his sketchbook.

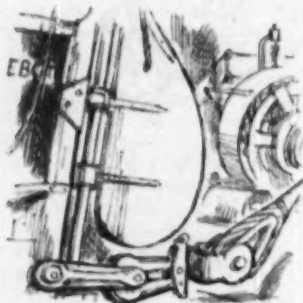
True, on this occasion there are "no wrecks and nobody drowned," but there is no difficulty at all in understanding that for a short time we are moving in a new and but dimly imagined world. For one thing we are surrounded by obvious signs of this fact. Lifeboats when one is aboard them have a way of ceasing to look like money-boxes, and after a century and a quarter of steady evolution this is not surprising. The familiar red-white-and-blue boat, that looks so small on a stormy ocean, is the product of all that ingenuity has been able to devise for one purpose and one purpose only—the saving of life at sea. This is the sole object for which the Royal National Lifeboat Institution exists; it treats all sea-borne



persons alike, in war and peace impartially, and in this connection its attitude towards salvage is noteworthy.

It is sometimes possible for a crew to bring in the vessel whose people they went out to save, and then they are entitled, if they choose (and often they do not), to claim salvage, which can be a very rewarding thing. Such a claim is notified to the Institution, which immediately washes its hands of the whole thing and becomes strictly neutral. The crew is then regarded as a private charter-party and receives a bill for hire of the lifeboat and for the fuel consumed. Single-minded people, the R.N.L.I., and their attitude to wrecking something removed from that of the Scilly Islanders of olden times, who used the prayer "We pray Thee, O Lord, not that wrecks should happen but that if they do happen Thou wilt guide them into the Scilly Isles for the benefit of the poor inhabitants."

And yet if the lifeboats are designed for one purpose only the men who man them are not. With the exception of the motor mechanic, an occasional coxswain and three or four crews at isolated stations, all are amateurs. Even the station secretaries are Hon. They have other fish to catch—though they are by no means all fishermen and many work ashore at jobs that have no connection with the sea. Fishmonger or pawnbroker, the lifeboatman must work reasonably near to his boat and be ready to drop everything and run at the first shattering whisper of the maroon. He may be in bed and asleep or sitting down to his Christmas dinner, but he will pull on his boots, gum, thigh, mutter some disgraceful words and go. This in spite of the fact that he has no signed agreement and is under no obligation of any sort beyond the one that he imposes on himself. Add to this the fact that the lifeboat expects to put to sea when everything else is struggling to safety,



and something rather breath-taking emerges.

Asked to account for this, a bowman explained the heroic enterprise in the words, "Well, we like it, I suppose." Pinned into a corner (between the starboard engine control wheel and the Schermuly pistol) and pressed to describe just how much he liked being up to his waist in water for eight hours in a winter gale in the Channel, he was understood to say that he loathed it like

Sunday morning and telephones to the dépôt to ask for a new mast, a microphone for the radio telephone and some more rum. All these desirable requirements will leave the dépôt within the hour, for that is the maximum time allowed for any dispatch. Here is rope by the mile, from light heaving-line to superlative ten-inch manila hawser. Here ultra-reliable lifebelts are being made. This crowded scene of lathes and pensive men—lifeboatmen also in a very real sense—is the machine shop. Elsewhere are spare rudders for every type of boat, over there some of the fifty thousand collecting-boxes are being painted, and that canvas-shrouded mound on

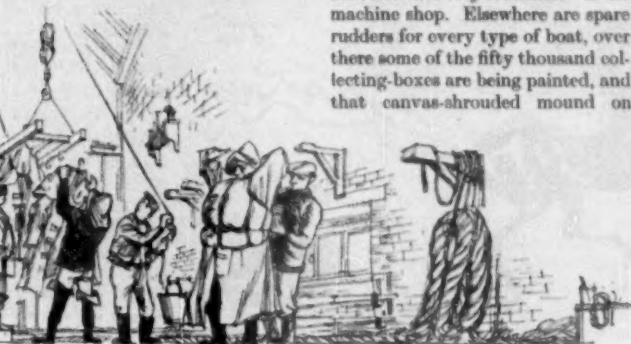
something that is the best of its kind in the world and made regardless of expense! If you cannot imagine, ask anyone who has ever tried to get something important but unavailable in a hurry from a purser's or quartermaster's store.

Biscuits and chocolate are free: the manufacturers provide them perpetually for nothing. Everything else is paid for by those who feel so inclined. It costs £650,000 a year, and is in no way dependent on the Government.

"In the past twenty years lifeboats have been out on service over nine thousand times. They have rescued over twelve thousand lives." (Average for the whole hundred and twenty-five years: eleven lives a week.) "In these services over ninety thousand lifeboatmen have taken part, and of those ninety thousand lifeboatmen fifty-six have lost their lives. That is to say that one man in every sixteen hundred has lost his life and one life has been lost for every two hundred and thirteen lives saved. Those figures show the quality of the men and their boats."

They certainly do. We can surely spare a thought—at the very least—for these men who of their own courage and goodwill go lightheartedly, down slipways and across open beaches, out into the cold and terrible violence of the sea.

P. R. BOYLE



poison. But he will be there next time, and so will his seven comrades and the helpers on the beaten shore.

So it goes on, with eight score motor lifeboats, of varying types and sizes, ready at a moment's call all round the coastlines of the British Isles, including Ireland. True, there are rewards, according to the circumstances of a call, but they represent little if any gain. To see the mainspring that keeps the whole thing ticking you must go not to the coast or the head offices in Grosvenor Gardens but to the dépôt at Boreham Wood. This is where everything comes from, except things that must go direct to the boats, such as petrol and oil. Walk round with Commander Upton, the superintendent. (He keeps a careful eye on one, alas!) Here is everything that a lifeboat uses, a matter of some forty-five thousand different items, some made on the premises and some by contract to R.N.L.I. specifications, all tested, indexed and ready for immediate issue.

Immediate issue. Suppose a boat comes in from service at three of a

which you barked your shin so carelessly is £250,000-worth of Diesel engine. (They design their own engines, you know. They will run under water but stop when upside down, because it would be so tiresome for the crew of a self-righter to find themselves bobbing in the water while their boat turned right side up again and chugged away without them.)

These people buy their own trees too, and eventually cut them down and send them off to be made into boats, for even builders are not allowed to choose timber for the boats. When gear is sent to a builder at, say, Cowes it is packed tenderly into a van that takes it over in the ferry and delivers it right in the yard. No bumping about in trains. One has the impression that if a propeller-shaft or a consignment of sparking-plugs is not wrapped in cotton wool it is only because none sufficiently serviceable can be obtained.

And how feel the men who know they have only to ask for what they want in order to receive, by return,



AT THE PICTURES

Woman in Hiding—Sand

AN unpretentious melodrama on a familiar plan of pursuit and violence, *Woman in Hiding* (Director: MICHAEL GORDON) could not be made to sound very attractive to people in search of something fresh—who aren't nearly as numerous, all the same, as is often suggested. What gave it interest for me was not the plot, or the violence, but the detail, the small-part players involved in it, and the skill (like an orchestral conductor's) with which the director handles a number of people on a busy screen.

The plot is an undistinguished one about a newly-married wife in terror of her homicidal husband, and the fights and other violent doings on the cat-walks in a mill (I forget, if I ever noticed, what the mill was making) are not as exciting as they were meant to be; but the detail is full of things interesting and amusing at the time and pleasant to remember afterwards. When a bus-driver faces his passengers before the start of a journey and flatly, sadly makes his little speech: "My name is . . . Our first stop will be . . . Please remain seated while the bus is in motion," the scene is as entertaining as it would be in life. The possibilities of a roaring "convention" of merry-making salesmen in an hotel were touched on in *Act of Violence*, and are further explored here to great effect. The activity at a bus-station, at a lunch-counter, at a news-stand—it is all shown with that imaginative heightening of trivial incident that makes such things an engrossing pleasure to watch. Apart from this there are certain points at which the main narrative has been given an interesting, credible freshness of

decoration: I'm thinking of the moment when the unconscious heroine gradually wakes to the noise, not very far off, of the crowd that is watching the removal of her car from the river.

These may seem unimportant, unnoticeable trimmings to anyone



Tooth and Claw

Jubilee—A Stallion of Good Family

for whom the story and only the story is the thing; but I emphasize that they can make all the difference between boredom and active interest.

Sand (Director: LOUIS KING) is credited to WILL JAMES, which presumably means he wrote the book on which it is based, and in that (presumably) the title is explained. Certainly the picture, which is one of those horse stories, has nothing literally to do with sand; the scene is Colorado, and the chief merit of the piece is some very pleasing Technicolor photography of scenery very far from arid. Its chief fault, I think, is a sort of determined amiability suggesting that all hands are out to produce something that shall be widely regarded as improving for the young. The reasons for this

impression are not easy to define or explain, but I would say one of them is exemplified by the moment when the hero, building a fence in a hurry, apostrophizes a beaver as he lifts a log: "Sorry, Mr. Beaver, but—" Well, this hero is really a subsidiary personage, for the picture is about a horse: a horse that ran wild, turned savage, and was reclaimed. In a study of equine character one does not look for any great depth, and on the surface at least this film can give a lot of satisfaction.

Survey

In the same London programme as *Sand* is an enjoyable lark called *It Happens Every Spring* (Director: LLOYD BACON): they didn't give it a Press show, so technically no critic may safely review it. But I

will risk the opinion that this unassuming comedy deserved to be the top half of the bill.

The two most interesting releases are *The Big Steal*, quite a gay pursuit melodrama showing the difficulties of motoring in Mexico, and *The Velvet Touch*, a murder story with ROSALIND RUSSELL that develops a good deal of suspense.

RICHARD MALLETT



Tooth and Nail

Selden Clark—STEPHEN McNALLY
Deborah Clark—IDA LUPINO

MRS. VENNER AND THE DRAMA

III

"TORN up your first act after all, I see," said Mrs. Venner, offering me one of my chocolates. "Didn't pan out too well, I daresay."

"I've decided to rewrite it," I said, "and treat it as a comedy."

"Ah," said Mrs. Venner, "funny stuff, eh? Tell you what. How about someone hiding Nigel's trousers! That always makes 'em laugh. He could keep coming in with things wrapped round him, saying 'Own up—who's got 'em?' 'Course, he'd have to find 'em in time for the bit where he proposes to Rosemary. You don't want it to be just silliness, do you?"

"No," I said. "A comedy of manners."

"That's right," said Mrs. Venner. "More of a mix-up. You don't want to have too much talking in a comic piece, because nobody can hear it for laughing. 'Course, every now and then someone can just come out with some funny saying, if you like, but you don't want to overdo it. Have you got a foreigner in it?"

"No," I said.

"Well, *do*," said Mrs. Venner. "Someone who can't talk proper English is always a scream. They wave their arms about, you see. Real droll. And then you can let them say a great long rigmarole in their own language, if you like.

That'll bring the house down. Is there a cupboard?"

"A cupboard?" I said.

"Where people can hide," said Mrs. Venner. "You can't have much fun without a cupboard. Sometimes it turns out to be a secret passage that comes out in the garden. People keep popping out of it and frightening the life out of you. Of course, you're going to have someone dressed up as someone else, aren't you?"

"Well . . ." I said.

"Oh, you must," said Mrs. Venner. "That's a comedy all over. I remember in Mr. Hepple's play, the one who was trying to hide from some of the others dressed up as one of the ones who were trying to find the one they thought was dressed up as one of them. And this chap with the limp was dressed up as the one who didn't want to hide from anyone, so the ones who were trying to find the one they thought was dressed up as Mrs. Bugle were really chasing the one who was dressed up as himself. Of course, the funny part was that this chap Hawkins turned out to be dressed up as the chap with the limp as well, and when you got them all together you couldn't tell who was who for the life of you."

"How extraordinary!" I said.

"Then they all went into the

cupboard," said Mrs. Venner. "and the curtain came down. That was my idea."

"A very good one, too," I said.

"Of course, mind you," said Mrs. Venner, opening the door, "you'll have to find something a bit different. You can't go putting in bits of other people's plays, or you might get had up for libel. But you see the idea?"

"Yes," I said, "and thank you."

"Well, cheerio," said Mrs. Venner.

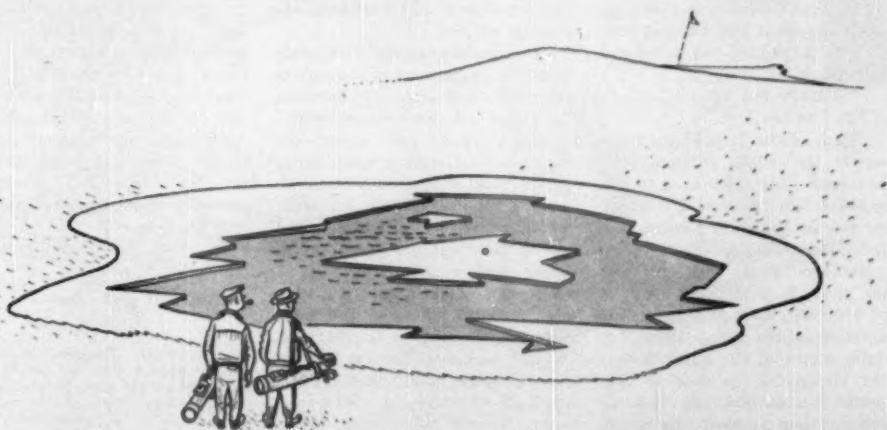
"Cheerio," I said.

BREAKFAST THOUGHT

A FROWN disfigures Celia's face
When she sees something out
of place.

A spot of coal-dust round the grate,
A picture that is not quite straight,
A masher in the drawing-room:
These fill her with the deepest gloom.
A finger-mark upon the wall,
A pair of stockings in the hall,
A careless guest who spills his wine,
Send shivers up and down her spine.

How strange that one so finely made
Should daub *The Times* with
marmalade.



—Guthrie

CLUB NIGHT

CLUBLAND is cloaked in silence.

My own club is smothered in it. I enter the porter's deserted cubby-hole in search of a bell, but there is only a telephone switchboard. I flick up all the switches: Secretary, Chef, Steward, Library, Bar, Dining-room; I say "Hello! Hello!" into the instrument. No one replies.

Just as I am framing my letter of resignation the stone hall resounds to the din of metal boots, and the porter appears; he wears a sports coat over his wasp waistcoat and eyes me narrowly as I restore myself to the proper side of his desk.

"Good evening," I say, ingratiatingly.

He looks at the fine old grandfather clock, now about to announce the hour of midnight, but does not greet me. I nevertheless explain that I have missed my last train, and desire a bed. Very much.

"Booked up," says the porter. To prove it he opens and shuts a small red book without looking at it, and casts it aside.

"Then," I say, after a brief expression of surprise and disappointment—"what about a settee?"

At this his look gets so narrow that it comes to a point, and I recall that the committee has had to legislate sternly against members sleeping in and under the club furniture.

"I 'aven't seen you come in, mind," he says at last, busying himself with a pad of old telephone messages.

"Certainly not."

"You're not 'ere."

"That's right." As I turn away towards the long, pillared hall, where something is smoking in the fine old Adam fireplace, I wink at him; but he has turned away first and is unknotting a lot of old string.

Members of my club, if they think about it at all, may imagine that when they have gone home the place shuts up like a shop, silent but for the snores of the night porter as he slumps at his desk in the majestic, marbled shadows. Not so. The porter does not sleep. He is not the only one.

Before I have reached my fifth position of experimental repose on a settee three feet too short for me, he begins his night's work in some unidentifiable part of the building—sweeping up a broken greenhouse and emptying it into a zinc bath. He does not tire of these duties until the fine old grandfather clock strikes one, by which time I have gathered myself into the middle of the settee in an attitude of prayer, have thought of all the towns I have slept in beginning with A, and have developed extra sets of hands and feet. The porter enters a cupboard full of buckets and kicks them about a bit; then, after parading up and down several times behind my settee, he goes away.

I draw deep, contented breaths in the silence. Three of them . . . before I notice that somewhere above the bomb-repair scaffolding, so long a feature of the main staircase, water is coming through the roof in single drops; the musical notes thus produced are well-defined, but variable in pitch, and the effect is of a determined attempt to play the first two bars of the National Anthem on a tarpaulin. By two o'clock I have reached the stage of continuing the more successful renderings into the third bar under my breath—when my blood chills to an unearthly, a hellish cry. The porter has taken his little vacuum-cleaner and begun on the upstairs carpets.

During the next hour I privately assess the carpet area of the club at four and a half acres, not counting the stairs. I don't know why I shouldn't count the stairs: the porter does: observing some meaningless ritual of his own he switches his cleaner on and off for each. When he has reached the last, and sent a few tins of metal polish rolling with a victorious kick, I reflect, with what drops of gratitude remain to me, that, at any rate, there are no carpets in the hall. The hall, as I soon discover by way of confirmation, calls for a mere half-hour's abortive scraping with a bald broom, special care being taken with the bits under my settee.

As far as I can judge it is about half-past four when I drop off deeply enough to have my short dream about the tram-accident. The porter is mending the fire. He puts all his heart into it; all the coal, too: this is a man the unions yet have to undermine. When he has gone out at the back for another scuttful he goes out again for another. And so forth. He distributes a dozen scuttles about the building, moving with firm, unhurried steps.

At five o'clock, on the very stroke, he begins marshalling crockery; it sounds thick and plentiful, with a smattering of knives, forks and whip-cracked tablecloths. The last thing I hear, as I ponder on the ignorance of those members who complain of idleness in the club servants, is the noise of something that seems to keep getting into a teapot and having to be shaken out on to a tray.

And then, suddenly, the night is over. The fine old grandfather clock is striking six, and the porter, filled with the rich satisfaction that crowns a night's work well done, is putting all the lights on and whistling "Phil the Fluter's Ball." Overnight his attitude has quite changed. He bustles up with hideous solicitude and asks how I have slept. For reply I rise, creaking, and put on my collar. He inquires whether I was warm enough: I reach in silence for my coat. He expresses the opinion that it is going to be a nice day. I have nothing to say on this subject either, but take my small change from the fine old Adam mantelpiece and put it in my pocket. All of it. As I make my way out into the starlit morning I recall that the committee has had to legislate sternly against members tipping the club servants.

J. B. BOOTHROYD

"Sir Henry Raeburn, a Scottish portrait painter who lived from 1756 to 1823, had all the great Scottish men of the day, except Burns, sit before him."
Newfoundland paper

Or so he said.



"We decided to amputate."



"We hadn't anything she liked."

THE COSMIC MESS

THIS column well understands that it is a shocking thing to "undermine the planned economy" by using your own money as if it were your own, spending £55 in France in a year, paying a foreigner's hotel bill in London, selling your own jewels overseas, and so on. But when it notes some of the savage sentences inflicted for such offences it wonders respectfully whether Parliament and the Courts have quite forgotten the twelfth

chapter of Magna Carta, which is "directed against excessive fines":

"A freeman shall not be amerced [i.e., fined] for a small fault, but after the manner of the fault, and for a great fault after the greatness thereof, saving to him his contenment; and a merchant likewise, saving to him his merchandise. . ."

A small "merchant" the other day was fined £21,000—or 12 months. He was said to have made a profit of £500—£1,000 out of his

improper transactions. The magistrate himself said that he knew the sentence would probably mean prison, meaning presumably that the fine could hardly be paid. Can such a fine be other than "excessive"? The magistrate, no doubt, was doing his duty according to the law. But should not Parliament, which made the law, think again?

* * * * *

A General Election approaches, and this column is worried again about "The Tide" and "The Pendulum", which are being worked too hard already. The pendulum has been doing some very queer things. This is from one of this column's favourite papers:

"Many members of the Labour Party believed some months ago that there was a swing against the Government. South Bradford is now thought to have shown that the pendulum is moving the other way."

Hey, hey, old fellow! Remember that the pendulum "swung" towards Labour in 1945. Ever since then (according to the rules of the political pendulum) it has been poised, on the Left, at an angle of about forty-five degrees. It can stay there, if you like, at the next Election and after: or it can suddenly swing across to the Right. But we really can not have it swinging down a little and then moving up again.

"We shall turn the tide"—"The tide has been turned"—these old favourites will be with us again, no doubt. This column has not yet seen a "We shall swing the pendulum", but even that may come. It is difficult to think of a better figure of speech for political fortune than "the tide" and "the pendulum", but it is impossible to think of a worse. They are both in constant motion; they are both, whichever way they go, bound to return quite soon. But those politicians who use them have in mind a change to a state of affairs which will endure for a long time, perhaps for ever. There is another difficulty. Each side uses the same pendulum, but there must be at least two different tides. What, for example, has the

tide been doing since the General Election of 1945! Since that silly Shakespeare made his famous remark about the tide "taken at the flood" no one has been interested in ebb-tides, though those are the ones that carry you to sunlit islands, adventures, victories, rich markets, etc. So the flood must have carried the Socialists to victory, and ever since, presumably, it has been "slack water"; a most unnatural phenomenon. But the Conservatives want the tide to turn, that is flow; so their tide must have been ebbing all the time. And all this is in the same river. Most unsatisfactory.

Another thing. Both the tide and the pendulum are a bit uncomplimentary to the electors (and, indeed, the politicians), because they suggest that opinion changes automatically in the end without the use of reason by the electors or effort by the politicians. You might as well say "The other end of the seesaw is coming up".

What is wanted is a change in affairs which (a) may last quite a time, and (b) can be controlled by Man. If (a) were all, something to do with the weather might suit, for that can be fair or foul for ages. How about "The barometer's rising!" or "Up goes the glass!"? That may not inspire you at first, but it is much more sensible than "The tide is turning!" or "The pendulum is swinging!" The objection is that it does not meet requirement (b) and Fate is the main election-winner still. "The train is coming in!" is attractive and satisfies (b)—though (a) is less well served (unless the Election is a terminus). Each party would have a different train, but that is better than each party having a tide. "The rose will blossom!" "The bell will ring!" "We'll bowl 'em out!" "It's a goal!" "The bath will fill!" Not very good. Indeed, this column does not know what to suggest. But it is just possible, perhaps, to say simply: "Truth is prevailing. We shall win."

* * * * *

Far back in 1939 the man Haddock, M.P., urging, not for the

first time, the imposition of a Betting Tax, said boldly:

"If I am given a free hand by His Majesty's Government I will undertake to get that Bill through and make a foundation upon which in a normal year they can get £20,000,000 of revenue."^e

And how the legislators laughed at him!

Last year (1948-49), though the betting laws have not been altered and horse-race betting has not been touched, the revenue from Betting Duty was £23,361,177. A. P. H.

^e Hansard, April 25, col. 1027

IN RETROSPECT

NOW is the time for unmusical singing.

Now is the season of communal song.

Of roundel and carol

And Roll out the Barrel

By voices uplifted and strong.

All I ask very humbly

In voice low and rumbley

Is please could the tenors refrain

From having a go

At desants they don't know

Again and again and AGAIN!

J. G.



"Can Bill and Fred have tea with us? Their mum's gone to the pictures."

THE YOUNG LADIES ARE NOT AT HOME

THE young ladies are not at home, sir, not of a week-day;

Miss Janet, she doesn't come home, sir, hardly at all. She's a nurse, sir; yes, at the hospital up in London. Same as her friend Miss Merolith up at the Hall.

The young ladies have all got jobs, one kind and another.

Miss Anne, she's away before breakfast, it's Workers' Canteens.

Miss Pen, she's the youngest, what's called Occupational Therapy.

No, nor do I, sir—can't rightly say what that means.

They none of them stay at home, nowadays, not the young ladies,

Not like it used to be, and not so long ago . . .

Yes, that's what Miss Pen's always talking about, "self-expression"

And "You can't be a drone," she says, "Smithey, and what about dough?"

That's how they talk, Miss Pen and the rest—democratic.

And we brighten up here at week-ends—if they don't go away.

But week-days, the house—in a manner of speaking—it's hollow . . .

That's so, sir, no putting the clock back, I'm sorry to say.

That's what Miss Pen says, my little Miss Penny. "You're sloppy,

Pure treacle, old Smithey! A house is a living-machine—

It's the life that's important." I told her, I said that's the trouble,

It's life that we're wanting, I told her, and not just routine.

"Poor Smithey," she says, and she sits on the footstool beside me

And asks me "But what did they do?" And she chatters away

And humming a bit of a song. But we can't all be doing,

Like a home's not the same without flowers, dear—that's what I say. JUSTIN RICHARDSON







FOLK DANCING

CECIL SHARP HOUSE is in Regent's Park Road, not far from Primrose Hill. It sounded like the right address for the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Surely the place, in a perpetual primrose mood, must be loud with spring's *tirra-lirras* and *rumty-tumties*? Even on so dim a morning one looked vaguely, and vainly, for some smock-and-jingle work in front of the gracious (and, it seemed, solid enough) red-brick building astride its corner site.

This, it is now clear, was a distressingly whimsical approach. Once inside Cecil Sharp House I knew again how unwise it was to tackle a new subject with the mind made up. I knew too that, physically, the place was less solid than it looked. The only people in its vast central hall—as it were the Big School of English folk dance—were builders, come to inspect the structure. It was blitzed in 1940; outer serenity is deceptive, and the Society prepares now to rebuild.

Presently, down in the director's office and upstairs again in the library, one ceased to regard folk dancing as an amiable game. A

double-page map from Mr. Douglas Kennedy's book was chastening. Mr. Kennedy, Director of the Society, first knew Cecil Sharp in 1911. In *England's Dances* he has just written the Enquire Within of his art. Its map (honour to Dr. Joseph Needham), which seems to be an ordinary map of England, is nothing of the kind: it is split, surprisingly, into Saxon Mercia, Danish Mercia, Northumbria, Wales, Wessex and Cornwall. There are no place-names, but there is a fine bristle of conventional signs, with some notes that make it perfectly plain to the student, though less so to the novice.

Thus, somewhere off the Thames estuary, is the label "Hoodening." Behind the Wash, and up in Lincolnshire, are "January Plough-stots." The area roughly between Manchester and Liverpool seems to be covered with "August Rush-carts." Derbyshire is occupied by "June Well-dressing." In Cornwall it is forever May Day. Up in the margin a lavish list explains: "Cotswold Morris, Derbyshire Morris, North-Western Morris (Coconut Dances), East Anglian Morris (Molly) . . ." and so on, down through "Rapper Sword Dances" and "Proces-

sionals." This, when the shock is over, proves to be simply "the geographical distribution of English ceremonial dance traditions." You begin to realize that folk dancing is not just a jolly oranges-and-lemons romp. It is indeed one of the oldest of survivals, a relic of prehistoric culture, something from the roots of religion, drama and art.

The odd thing is that, like the man who spoke prose all his life without knowing it, Englishmen have been performing strange primitive rituals through the centuries without knowing the reason: certainly without knowing that in dancing the Morris and the Sword Dance they have been expressing battles between life



and death, something derived from early dance-magic. A Morris is not merely a go-as-you-please tinkle-trip by white-clothed, ribboned dancers on a village green. Not at all. It is an ancient seasonal custom. It is "primeval jigging." Even the clothes and the ribbons and the bells are symbolic of the living forces freed in the spring.

Do not believe that the dance started with someone called Morris; the boy who murmured "Nuffield" goes to the bottom of the class. It is the "Morisco": the name implies solely that the dancers—in the manner of ritual folk ceremonies—blackened their faces and were therefore "blackamoors" or "Moorish." (There are other explanations: this

will serve). Countrymen in various places have been dancing the primeval jig of the Morris far down the years. Yet no one inquired into it until Cecil Sharp, on Boxing Day, 1899, happened to be in the village of Headington, Oxfordshire. He was collecting folk songs, but the dance that he saw performed (out of season) by bricklayers and quarrymen, with William Kimber as its musician, stayed in the mind. A few years later, when he was asked at a working girls' club for dances to match his folk songs, he remembered the Headington Morris.

Though there had to be much trial and error, before long the folk-dance movement developed an irresistible rhythm, collecting dances and enthusiasts as it went. To-day the whole structure, as restored at Cecil Sharp House—the M.C.C. of the art—is so complex that it seems incredible it is the work of only fifty years.

The Morris and its variations—there is a particularly brisk one at Bacup, with "coconuts" strapped to palms, wrists and knees—have a partner in the Sword Dance, also for men. This, from the ancient mid-winter festival, is a dance of death and resurrection. At one place, Flamborough, it is danced—very rapidly—by fishermen in heavy boots. Here, for most of the time, the eight men are linked in a ring by their wooden swords, which at the end are woven into a lock or wheel. Northumbrian dancers use a short flexible sword called a "rapper." In Grenoside, near Sheffield, the sword-dance leader brandishes a curved sabre and wears a hare-skin cap. Some of the dances include a sword-flourish which is known as "whiffling" and which means that the sword-bearer is clearing away the evil spirits.

You must not think that

the dances are solely ceremonial or processional. (It was alarming to hear that the Helston Furry Dance is an old "purification ceremony.") These apart, there are the more general community dances, the gay "social dances" whose essence, says Mr. Kennedy, is that the individual loses his "self" in a "common bond of unanimous expression." They were so popular in Tudor times that we were known as the Dancing English.

Folk dancing is less easy than it looks. When it is mastered it exhilarates. I gather that the novice should never seek to analyse what he is doing: he should merely do it, without self-consciousness. I am interested in the hockle-back-step and the "Galley," but what most endears me to folk dancing is the knowledge that in a Morris you are able, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, to Cut a Caper. There are also Kick-jumps and Double-capers, but I shall be quite content with a succession of simple Capers, "a series of rebounds with the energy concentrated on to the downward

movement directly comparable to hitting or stotting an india-rubber ball."

You come away from Cecil Sharp House (may it soon be repaired) bent upon capering around Primrose Hill. Facts turn cartwheels in your head. You murmur about decorated hats, harlequinades, pagan festivals, medicine-making, the "ancient folk-drama" of Punch and Judy, the maypole as "a permanent monument to the pagan past," William Kimber of Headington (father of the English folk-dance revival, and still alive and kicking), the Jolly Lads and Besom Betty, Hobby Horses and Horn Dancers, the Goathland Plough-stots, the Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance. Probably you have it all wrong and hopelessly telescoped, but at least you will never again regard the delight, the gaiety of a folk-dance festival as an aimless jiggle. The Society has thousands of adherents. In these days we can speak again, and happily, of the Dancing English: the folk dance belongs to Merry England, and we need not spell it Merrie.

J. C. TREWIN



CLUB COMMITTEE

An H. J. Dramatic Fragment

CHAIRMAN. Now there's this chap Fokkittle. We put off and put off deciding whether we'll have him, but if we put it off much longer he'll be eligible for the reduced entrance fee for the aged.

SECRETARY. Nobody has actually met him. I went down and peered through the railings of his house, but I couldn't see anything except some clock-work sundials in the garden.

Mr. PROSSER. His proposer and seconder are pretty dark too. They were only elected last year and they have given notice of resignation already.

Mr. SWEYD. The chairman ought to invite him to lunch. Then we'd all be the other guests and try to draw him out in conversation.

Mr. BAILD. He describes himself on the application form as "Expert of independent means," but does not say expert on what. He would not be popular among our members if his knowledge outdistanced theirs. Very miscellaneous talkers are our members.

CHAIRMAN. We'll put private inquiry agents on him to root out his qualifications. Now there is this question of Polly Juniper.



"If she suddenly thinks of a thing it has to be done at once."

SECRETARY. In accordance with the instructions of the committee I interviewed Wallace Prote about his complaint. He explained that when he wrote in the suggestion-book that Polly Juniper should be forbidden the precincts of the club he merely meant that she should not be engaged again to sing to members after dinner.

Mr. SWEYD. That was an unchivalrous way of putting it. Members are always complaining that the club is dull. We thought a soprano with the coffee would help.

Mr. BAILD. Her high notes cracked Prote's glasses, and he took rather a personal view of her in consequence.

Mr. PROSSER. Surely she can be allowed to sit in the Ladies' Annex provided she does not sing in the club proper. After all, her portraits of ex-chairmen have been a feature of club life for many a year.

CHAIRMAN. She is not going to do a portrait of me. No wild waves in the distance and doves bearing laurel wreaths overhead.

SECRETARY. I must remind the chairman that he is the servant of the club and that what the club want he must submit to. What the club want at present is a picture of him by Polly Juniper.

Mr. BAILD. How is she getting on with the club history?

Mr. SWEYD. She has found out that the site was once a House of Correction for Relapsed Scolds. That should help her to get through Volume Three. She is strong on embroidering a theme, is Polly.

Mr. BAILD. The financial side of it is what worries me. We shall have to amalgamate with someone to get it finished.

Mr. PROSSER. We amalgamated with the Junior Coleopterists to pay for Volume One and the Veterans of Oct. '73 to pay for Volume Two. We have reached the limits of absorption.

CHAIRMAN. Order, order! Let us hear something from the Wine Committee.

Mr. SWEYD. Owing to phylloxera the club conservatory has not done too well. We hope, however, in the course of the next few years to lay down a vintage that will warm the cockles of the then membership. Meanwhile, we are continuing to enter for draws and report the acquisition of one whisky, one port and a home-brewed cordial named "Bertha's Own."

Mr. PROSSER. Could not the bar learn a new recipe for cocktails? Perhaps Professor Fyce-Dark could be sent on a course.

SECRETARY. Members have been more than satisfied come the past fifty years with "Ludus Londoniensis" and "Pilus Canis." They have also had the opportunity of drinking sherry in its natural form. This craze for novelty is something that has come over the club since Ensign Middledew's decease.

CHAIRMAN. I dined the other day at a tavern where they had a concoction I found most palatable. It was made, I think, by admixing Hollands and the juice of limes.

MR. SWEYD. A true cocktail should contain olives on little sticks.

MR. PROSSER. And nutmeg.

MR. VORCE. And be served piping hot.

CHAIRMAN. Oh, are you there? Then we have a quorum after all. Surely cocktails contain ice, and while a hot sauce is certainly sometimes served with ices, with cocktails it would require more skilful timing than our bar can usually contrive.

SECRETARY. Professor Fyce-Dark likes to do his compounding for the week on Saturday afternoon.

MR. SWEYD. The Wine Committee will carefully consider the representations made. Let us turn to the consideration of Ladies' Night.

CHAIRMAN. The Walpurgis Committee have put forward the name of Polly Juniper as Queen of the Revels.

SECRETARY. That will make her fortieth year of office. We might signalize it by some alteration in the wording of the toast.

MR. PROSSER. That will mean rewriting my speech, and I object.

CHAIRMAN. Just a subordinate clause, just a subordinate clause. The main structure will not be affected.

MR. PROSSER. It is kept in standing type by the newspapers, and the expense of proof-corrections would fall on club funds.

MR. BAILD. We can increase the price of guests' tickets. There is always an answer if you only look for it.

MR. PROSSER. That is a most dangerous point of view. It leads to things like disregarding the Law of Gravity.

MR. VORCE. I have never held the Law of Gravity to be much. Because Sir Isaac Newton was a Member of Parliament his views received consideration more than they merited. It was not as though he had sat as a Lord.

CHAIRMAN. Gentlemen, gentlemen! The annual general meeting is within five minutes of being upon us and we must present a united front. Ayes? Noes? Neutrals?

SECRETARY. I propose we compromise.

MR. SWEYD. I second that.

OMNES. Me too. Very statesmanlike. So be it.

CHAIRMAN. If there are any members outside, call them in.

FINIS

R. G. G. PRICE

"In an interview, Mr. Gatenby said: 'The difference between the coal which is raised and weighed and that which is saleable is to us muck. We are appealing to the miners to do what they can to cut it out.'"—Daily paper

Not to cut it out, surely.



"Actually, doctor, I'm not sure that I shouldn't have called the plumber."

FIGURES ON THE PLATFORM. THE NIGHT TRAIN

TRAVELLING at night no man has any home
Beyond the station's melancholy dome.
The giant tired engine starts again
Through homeless fields anonymous in rain.
Now it has gone. But that was not our train.
Even the kit-bag and the trundled can
Are cared-for and considered more than man
Who has been tired and travelling since his life began.
His soul, uncomforted by cups of tea,
Envises the soul of the baby on his knee,
Escaped in peace from its small house of sense.
Even his grin for the waitress was pretence;
And soon his cup will lose its dwindling heat
Abandoned on the desert of a seat;
Even the bottom sip was hardly sweet,
It could not make him hope; it tasted sad, of spoon . . .
If only the end of his journey would come soon—
But it will never come in a thousand hours.
We are the prey of melancholy powers;
Remote they are yet easily roused and crossed;
They may not scourge us all for being lost
If we remain their puppets twitched and toxed,
They may not quite malevolently mind
Our presence in this void, if hopelessly resigned.

F. C. C.

DON'T CUT THIS OUT

IT is a sound principle, I believe, to put as much daylight as possible between one's forecast of the General Election results and the election itself, polling day. A long shot wins a certain immediate respect merely by its boldness and the beauty of its soaring trajectory, and later very few people remember or bother to measure its inaccuracy.

So don't, please, cut this out.

My forecast is based very largely on straightforward numerology and a flair of mine for indefatigable research. The omens, I find, are particularly favourable to the Conservatives. Over the last hundred years thirty-three elections have been fought, all of them in one or other of the calendar months. There have been six in February, five in May, four in December, June and July, three in August, two in April and November, one in January, March and October and none in September. And now here comes February again, with yet another election to its name—a rather remarkable performance when you remember that February is considered short as months go and exceptionally wet. The really important point, however, is that of these six February elections no fewer than four—those of 1852, 1858, 1868

and 1874—were won by the Conservatives. If this is not a clear indication I should like to know what is.

But wait; this election is to be held on the twenty-third day of the month, and more elections have been held on the twenty-third during the last hundred years than on any other date. Need I tell you that the Conservatives have never lost an election held on the twenty-third and that neither the Liberals nor the Socialists have ever won one?

Now take the year 1950 and add together its digits. Fifteen? Right: well, only twice in the last hundred years have election year digits totalled fifteen—in 1923 and 1905—and on both occasions . . . oh! . . . no, I'm sorry. Forget the digits for a moment.

Perhaps, after all, the only sound way of building up a forecast is to work carefully through the six hundred and twenty-five constituencies and examine the candidates against the backcloth of local politics and economics. I shall deal first with the English Boroughs, in alphabetical order: *Accrington*. Here we find three candidates, Mr. H. Hynd (Labour), Major H. A. Procter (Conservative) and Mr. K. Blakeman (Liberal.) At the last

election Labour polled twenty-one thousand one hundred votes against sixteen thousand odd and six thousand two hundred for the Conservatives and Liberals respectively, so that if history repeats itself (as they say) the verdict on February 23 is likely to be "No Change." But Accrington is in Lancashire, one of the largest and most populous of our counties. Moreover Accrington (with Blackburn) specializes on the production of "dhooties," those long narrow strips of cloth worn by male Hindoos as pantaloons. The result, therefore, may not be the foregone conclusion many people suppose. The indications are that this will be a close fight with the decision going finally to the party winning the largest measure of popular approval.

Acton. The candidates in this constituency would seem to be Mr. J. A. Sparks (Labour), Mr. G. Willment (Conservative), Miss P. Furniss (Liberal) and Mr. B. Papworth (Communist). At the last election . . . (NOTE.—The complete text of this analysis may be inspected at the gas showrooms, Matlock, weekdays between 9.30 A.M. and 7.30 P.M.).

And now at long last I am in a position to tabulate these deliberations and present my final forecasts:

Labour	332
Conservative	287
Liberals	6

And after a re-count, with all objections sustained . . .

(You see? The Editor has cut this out.) BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

5 5

HATH THE RAIN A PERMIT?

I MET an aged countryman
Upon a bleak hillside.

"And will the rain go on all day,
Thou aged man?" I cried.

He lifted up his reedy voice
And answered courteously;
And thus the local weather-love
Did he expound to me:

"The forecast on the wireless said
Continuing fine and warm."
I thanked the aged man, and so
Fared on into the storm.



"I'm so glad we got these covers — Rover's hairs aren't going to show a bit."

AT THE PLAY

Venus Observed (ST. JAMES'S)
The Miser (NEW)

MR. CHRISTOPHER FRY relies on the undoubted excitement of his language to veil his disinclination to tell a story, and its failure to do so is the weakness of *Venus Observed*; yet in spite of a sometimes confused method and a slow start I think this play cuts much deeper into human feeling than his earlier work. Verse is again the medium, of the kind Mr. Fry writes so well: heady stuff, brimming over with imagery and under such nice control that in a flash it can turn from the feather-weight cut-and-thrust to a gigantic pillow-fight of words. It is remarkable not only in quality but also in the way it absorbs Mr. Fry's tumultuous vocabulary without sounding stilted on the stage.

To tell you that a rather Gothic astronomer-duke gathers his old loves about him with a view to selecting one in marriage, is swept away by his agent's young daughter, and, losing her to his own son, returns in a mood of resignation to the early flame who has just burned down the west wing in an inflammatory fit of jealousy, is to give but the barest impression of a piece that draws freely on mythology and hinges on the character of a man at once heartless and compassionate. Now and then one detects similarities to T.S. Eliot's "The Cocktail Party," though the atmosphere of the two plays is very different; and Sean O'Casey might not have disdained the lion-tamer and the cat-burglar



[*Venus Observed*]

The Rivals

The Duke of Albair—SIR LAURENCE OLIVIER; *Perpetua*—MISS HEATHER STANNARD; *Edgar*—MR. DENHOLM ELLIOTT

who staff an extraordinary establishment.

SIR LAURENCE OLIVIER, who has put a fine polish on all this, plays the *Duke*, with the utmost accomplishment, in a grey wig. This is not a part that taxes him, but Mr. FRY's verse deserves to be perfectly handled, and it is. Mr. GEORGE RELPH blethers delightfully as an innocent swindler, Miss VALERIE TAYLOR comes as near moving us as the author allows, and Miss HEATHER

STANNARD gives a brightly delicate performance as the girl who knows the dangers of an apple. Miss RACHEL KEMPSON, Mr. DENHOLM ELLIOTT and others make up a sound cast. Add two charming sets by Mr. ROGER FURSE, and agreeable light music by Mr. HERBERT MESGES, and it will be obvious that *Venus* is unlikely to be obscured for some time. This is a play to see.

"*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas Molière*" seems the obvious comment on the newest addition to the Old Vic's repertory. *The Miser* is altogether more farcical and skit-tish than "L'Avare," but we can scarcely grumble, for it is extremely entertaining. Mr. MILES MALLESON's free adaptation nimbly telescopes the original into a couple of almost continuous acts, and Mr. MALLESON himself, hero of a resounding evening, draws abundant fun from a *Harpagon* far gone in senility. Miss ANGELA BADDELEY is a riot as the go-between, and Mr. GEORGE BENSON scores heavily as the cook-coachman doomed to be wrong. Miss DIANA CHURCHILL, Miss JANE WENHAM, Mr. MICHAEL ALDRIDGE and Mr. JOHN VAN EYSEN extract romping comedy from amorous manoeuvres under the miser's nose, and Mr. WALTER HUDD and Mr. MARK DIGNAM amusingly represent contrasting types of magistrate. Except in the miser's soliloquies, which tend to drag, Mr. TYBONE GUTHRIE's production is brisk and adroit. ERIC KEOWN

Recommended

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST—New—Charming production in Old Vic repertory.

DAFNE LAUREOLA—Wyndham's—Brillie and Edith Evans both at their best.

*TREASURE HUNT—Apollo—Irish extravagance, with Sybil Thorneike exquisitely mad.

(*Suitable for young people)



On Guard

[*The Miser*]

Harpagon—MR. MILES MALLESON



"But remember—if I'm not asleep in five minutes it's no sale."

THE MAN WITH THE PLAYGROUND

THE man's voice defied ridicule. "I want a budgerigar's playground."

The assistant consulted higher authority. "Guv'nor, do we 'ave budgigars' playgrounds?"

The man tried his best to look unconcerned. Two girls near him nudged each other and giggled. Guv'nor indicated a cupboard on the wall. "There," he said. "Look. Next to the dog 'arnesses, remember?" Muttering slightly, he returned to his other duties.

The assistant took the playground out of the cupboard. It was a wooden board with a rough swing

mounted on it. There were also a bell, and a celluloid ball, and a little tin mirror clamped to the board with metal struts. A ladder got caught up with the playground as it came out of the cupboard. The assistant regarded this doubtfully, then resolutely put it back.

Tentatively he touched the swing with his finger; it rocked inconsequently backwards and forwards. He flicked the bell; it rang with a dutiful tinkle. He blew on the celluloid ball; it cavorted skittishly in the air. He lifted the mirror up, then let it go; it clicked back smartly into its place on the

board. Disgust and self-consciousness suddenly overcame him, and he thrust the playground against the man's chest. "'Ere," he said, "I only sell 'em. Do you want it wropped up?" he added grudgingly, when it was paid for.

The man said "No. I'll take it as it is."

Women glanced at him sideways in the street. Three boys commented, with one voice, "Sissy!" The policeman holding up the traffic at the bus-stop looked contemptuous. The man climbed on to the top of the bus, and laid the playground on the seat by his side.

People going along to the front stared at the playground, then stared at the man. People who were together stared at each other. "What is it, Mummy?" a child asked across the gangway.

"Sh!"

"Well," the woman's husband said, "what is it!"

The man considered him coldly. "It's a budgerigar's playground."

"What did the man say!" the child asked the woman.

"It's a budgerigar's playground."

"What's a budgerigar's playground?"

The woman said "Sh!" again.

"But why can't I know what it is, a budgerigar's playground?"

The woman looked apologetically at the man with the playground.

"What did he say it was?" a man in a cloth cap inquired of his wife.

"He said it was a budgerigar's playground."

"Well!" The man in the cloth cap admitted himself defeated.

The conductor coming up the stairs looked round. "No standing on top," he declared. "There's a seat up there, chum."

The soldier who had been standing at the back came along to where the man was sitting with the playground. He waited while the man gathered it to him off the seat. "That's all right, chum," he assured him, placatingly.

"Bit funny, I should think, isn't he?" a woman with a shopping basket consulted her neighbour, *sotto voce*.

The man picked up the playground and made his way towards the stairs to get off. The bell on the playground tinkled as he walked, and the little swing swung slowly backwards and forwards. The woman with the shopping basket and her neighbour exchanged significant glances.

* * * * *
Down on the conductor's platform the explanations were being laboured anew. "But what's it for!" the conductor concluded, in simple inquiry. "'Ave you got a budgerigar?"

PARTY HINTS

I AM writing this for mothers of young children: mothers who have just finished their first serious party season and would like to make a good job of next year's.

As every mother knows, a young children's party is divided into games and tea, and the games section may be subdivided into the preliminary rushing about and the organized gambols. Most mothers are acutely time-conscious and may be relied on to arrive during this rushing about, but I must point out that if they should be late they will be held by other mothers to be cheating, as they will end up a game short, while if they should be early they will find their hostess in an overall, putting the furniture away. Every mother should therefore aim at five minutes after the appointed time, which gives her another five minutes to sew on the suddenly-popped shoe-button and damp down the boiler.

It is, of course, only the children of school age or near it who rush about: the younger ones remain quietly tethered to their last link with home. Mothers of either category should keep to the edge, talking animatedly to the mothers they know and failing to catch the names of those they do not. The child at anchor should be given an occasional encouraging shove, without results.

With the announcement of the first game, which we will take to be Musical Bumps, the drill for mothers is to step forward eagerly into the proposed circle and to make an attempt to coax their little ones to hold the hands of the little ones next to them. With Musical Bumps the question very soon arises of what to do when the music stops. I don't think mothers need feel in the least obliged to fling themselves to the ground as do the older children. A mother in nylons will have done right by the game if she



smiles brightly and hunches her head and shoulders down in a way which indicates that she would be sitting right on the floor if she didn't think she was too old. Indeed, no mother who smiles brightly need do much more, though a mother wearing a very cheap pair of stockings with a mended ladder might sit back on her heels. The idea anyway is not so much a competitive action as a sit-down order to the child concerned, for in this game, as in all of them, mothers are adjuncts and win or lose with their children. It is hard for a keen mother to be sent out at the first bump merely because her child happens to be facing outwards, bewilderedly upright, but it would be harder if she asked the child to wait at the ringside while she carried on.

What I have said about Musical Bumps holds good for most round-and-round games, but many entail singing, which means that mothers may be called on suddenly to join in "Here We Go Lubin Loo." They should keep calm and cruise round

smiling until they have got enough of the tune to sing "Da-diddy-da." Most mothers sing their best at parties because their only aim is to help. The occasions for self-consciousness are the ball games, when even a woolly ball lobbed a yard can show a mother up. She will do well to forget her mediocre school cricketering career and sink herself in the sheer fun of the thing.

Of the long rather than round game, Oranges and Lemons occurs most often and hits chiefly those mothers whose hair is done up on top. Let them take comfort from the fact that coming-down hair, if it is worn with a smile (I cannot over-emphasize the importance, every minute of a party, of an expression of benevolent gaiety), looks as if a mother is having a romp. Romping is certainly the keynote of this jolly game. Mothers who cannot both sing and dance, while holding their hands out, or squeeze laughingly under a three-foot bridge, pushing a mystified child before them, are advised to practise at home first.

Stooping with the neck bent back and the head carried at the upright should in any case be mastered before the next party season opens. Hunt the Thimble can leave a mother with severe cramp, not to mention a feeling of inferiority. I wish I could tell mothers how to locate the thimble before the other mothers do, but I can only suggest that they go for small brass knobs, the Christmas tree and the host's turn-ups if he is sitting on the table looking genially mysterious. No mother should *find* the thimble, but a judicious "Do you think it might be near here, darling?", if her child doesn't even know what game it's meant to be playing, will help things along.

I'm sorry I haven't the space to tell mothers how to behave at tea. They stand, of course, behind their children's chairs, and it is up to them to eat enough not to feel done; the food is there, goodness knows, and they have every chance of handing it round. ANDE



"And if I had my time over again I'd rescue the dragon."

BOOKING OFFICE

Tears, Idle Tears

ONE of the worst contemporary illusions is that the past was secure and the present abnormally and unprecedentedly insecure. Three new novels deal with insecurity, and a tension is evident in them between the natural vitality of the writers and their acceptance of the fashionable doctrine. Mr. Fritz Peters in *The World Next Door* has written much the best description I know of insanity and the return to normality. His narrator, committed to a Veterans' Mental Hospital, fights his way from the insecurity of hallucination to a grasp of the environment sufficient to enable him to defeat it. The book is really a tribute to the hardness of the human mind, and its implications are optimistic; but Mr. Peters is uneasily conscious of the conventional world of disillusion, rackets and fear. At times he seems to suggest that the diseased world of the sick mind he is describing is a reflection of an external reality, although the change from regarding madness as an unalterable condition to regarding it as a curable disease has removed a menace which hung heavily over our ancestors, and life is, in consequence, more and not less secure.

Mr. Philip Woodruff's *The Island of Chamba* deals with insecurity in a native state when Britain withdraws from India. The idyllic pictures of life before the withdrawal are contrasted with the rising communal feeling that accompanies it, and Mr. Woodruff's clean, primary colours make us accept his point of view, despite the fact that the change in the balance of power is accomplished with very little fuss and pain compared with similar changes in the past. Unfortunately, the lively political narrative and social description, the pleasant collection of incongruities and odd characters do not seem to the author to be enough without a hero who is a laggard in love, has been psychologically injured at his prep school and fails, at least by his own standards, at the moment of crisis. These personal details occupy very little space and add nothing to the novel. I suppose they are *de rigueur* and show the insecurity of life in Chamba paralleled by the internal insecurity of the man who observes it.

Mr. Richard Llewellyn's *A Few Flowers for Shiner* will become a best seller and probably an exciting film. One reads it with the upper layers of one's mind completely engaged with the adventures of three soldiers—Cockney, Lancashire and American—as they drive through the back areas of the Italian theatre of war to lay a wreath on the grave of a dead comrade. Their odyssey, to coin a *mot juste*, includes an earthquake, a volcanic eruption, philanthropic work among refugees, capture by partisans, meetings with an American-born Italian countess, and a thrilling local war with a highly organized gang of deserters, ending with a very photogenic battle in their subterranean workshop. The social and sexual tensions between the members of the party and the relations of a mechanical with a subsistence farming civilization complicate and enrich the tapestry. Mr. Llewellyn is

a most efficient and deservedly successful writer with a tremendous appetite for describing every aspect of experience, despite a slight impatience of routine narrative which sometimes slows his story down and makes the sequence of events obscure. He has energy and self-confidence, and is doing a job he can do extremely well. Why, then, must he pay lip-service to the view that life is now predominantly grey? It is this slick acceptance of pessimism that makes his book seem shallow and unoriginal in retrospect.

All these novels are very good of their kind and I enjoyed them. Their authors have been sufficiently interested in their story to forget the alleged modern predicament for enough of the time to gain the reader's attention. Mr. Woodruff's lucidity and charity, Mr. Llewellyn's inventiveness and gusto and Mr. Peters' brilliant writing and narrative power are themselves evidence that life is not all bad. Is it not time that a moderate optimism returned to fashion? After all, madness has become curable; casualties are not left on the battle-field to rot of gangrene from arrow-wounds; fewer refugees die of famine and pestilence; war veterans need no longer beg in the street; two and a half years after the British withdrawal India and Pakistan are not yet engaged in mutual extermination. Optimism works.

R. G. G. PRICE

The Gadfly in Architecture

Though still in his middle forties Mr. John Summer-son, now curator of the Soane Museum, has been, with fast-growing reputation, writing and lecturing on Architecture, mainly addressing himself to professional students and colleagues. In *Heavenly Mansions* he has collected ten essays—on Wren, John Wood, Butterfield, Viollet-le-Duc, Gandy (painter of architectural



"... and whatever you do—steer clear of politics."

fantasies), Le Corbusier, with four abstract theses. Wearing his learning lightly, challenging accepted positions without cantankerousness or dogmatism, critical but not carping, and with a lively and precise pen, he is an admirable guide for any amateur of architecture who welcomes a book of which two careful readings (as in the case of this—theoretically—"jaded" reviewer) convey promise of further delightful and profitable browsings. Wren, Hawksmoor, Vanbrugh, Gibbs, Robert Adam, Chambers, the younger Dance, Soane, C. R. Cockerell, Pugin, Butterfield, Lutyens, "and perhaps one or two more"—these are, in the author's view, the great men of English architecture in the last three hundred years.

J. F. T.

Juvenile Lead

One likes to see Miss Oriol Malet concentrating on a small, solid, three-dimensional child—her "Marjory Fleming" brought out to the full her remarkable talent for painting a lily. But there is more paint than lily about *The Green Leaves of Summer*, which relates the fortunes of a dozen young people, only one of whom commands respect as a work of art and affection as a personality. Their background ranges from "Panto" to an Academy of Dramatic Art and Ballet, with boarding-houses and genteel tenements thrown in; and the ghosts of little girls—Henrietta, who is merely stage-struck, Serena, who expects to get on in repertory, and Lucy who is afflicted with a poltergeist—wander on and off murmuring fragments of their respective parts. Pippit Archer is worth watching: a four-square little orphan whose natural aversion to orphanages has landed her as the much-exploited third of a "turn." Pippit's long-deferred escape shows Miss Malet at her best.

H. F. E.



Crime for the Connoisseur

It was perhaps inevitable that chronic addicts of detective fiction should have elevated their vice into an art. The old hit-and-miss blood-and-blunder is no longer enough. The morgue is now approached aesthetically on tiptoe, and the behaviour of deductive magicians rolled across the critics' palates with a solemnity that would have staggered Conan Doyle. Mr. James Nelson writes about criminal literature as if it were wine, or tragedy, or something that really mattered, but he does it well; and his *The Complete Murder Sampler*, a collection of fifteen stories, each representing a different species of the genre, is a selective feast that will please lowbrows as well as add to the higher education of advanced students. All the main categories are here, and among the authors are W. W. Jacobs, John Buchan, Edgar Wallace, G. K. Chesterton, R. Austin Freeman, Somerset Maugham, and Geoffrey Household. Horning's Raffles, playing for the Gentlemen, is still exciting, but still seems more than ever lucky not to be caught in the first over.

E. O. D. K.

The Beardsley Period

One wonders whether an anthology culled from "Horizon" would be as fascinating half a century hence as is Mr. Norman Denny's selection from *The Yellow Book*, its counterpart in the 'nineties. Some dated pieces require of course an unusually sympathetic response; Crackanthorpe has here an essay in higher criticism which smells of the lamp, and a poem by Olive Custance is very minor Dowson. For robustness one must look rather to those untiring spirits who survived well into this century, and found in Henry Harland's quarterly an invigorating spring-board into the shallow end. Here are Arnold Bennett anticipating the remorseless realism of his maturity, Henry James sighing for "a lone isle in a tepid sea," the youthful Max kicking up his highly polished heels; and the illustrations are as charmingly diverse. Like so many of its contributors *The Yellow Book* died young. But it presented some gems; and these should be relished where they belong—in a plush-upholstered saloon, glassy and gilded.

N. A. D. W.

Books Reviewed Above

- The World Next Door*. Fritz Peters. (Gollancz, 12/6).
The Island of Chamba. Philip Woodruff. (Cape, 9/6).
A Few Flowers for Shiner. Richard Llewellyn (Michael Joseph, 10/6).
Heavenly Mansions. John Summerson. (Cresset Press, 21/-).
The Green Leaves of Summer. Oriol Malet. (Faber, 10/6).
The Complete Murder Sampler. Edited by James Nelson. (Macdonald, 10/6).
The Yellow Book: A Selection. Compiled by Norman Denny. (Bodley Head, 15/-).

Other Recommended Books

- The Story of Art*. E. H. Gombrich. (Phaidon Press, 21/-). Handsome, comprehensive popular history; art sympathetically expounded from cave paintings to Klee, from Pheidias to Picasso. 370 illustrations, twenty-one in colour.
Poems in Praise of Cats. Compiled by Hamilton Fyfe. (Bannisdale Press, 3/6). Charming little anthology: poems old and new, writers famous and obscure. Contemplative, allusive introduction by the author.

THE RUNNABLE FOX

YOU may argue (said the huntsman) as you choose. But know it I do, from the experience of child, boy and man, that the fox has his pleasure out of being hunted as much as, and maybe more than, the hunter in hunting. I do not say that enjoyment he has in being killed, any more than the hound in the run of a profitless day. But what hound sets out with the expectation before him of a blank run; and what fox with the prognostications of being in at his own death? It is like politics and love and other diversions of time. Not by its disappointments do you judge the prospects of the game but by the chances of winning in it. The fox that is chopped first time is out of this argument or any other. But the fox that gets away once flourishes in his expectancies of doing it again. And the fox is as unpredictable in his deviations as a woman, and enjoys them as much. And has less conscience in them, too, if that is possible for a beast with no vocabilities.

And proof of my contentions can you have.

It was when I first took over the pack and had the waistcoat and the climbing-stick from old Wil Pandey, huntsman before me. Which thing I tell you for extenuation of the tale, for it puts no credit on me.

There was one fox that had Wil Pandey beaten; and there was one young bitch-hound, new in entry, that he had ambitions for.

Often had I seen the fox, grey about the muzzle even from the first time I remember him. Me a little lad on the hill-side, seeing him run along the stacked slate-wall with the sun drying-off his scent and then stand and work his ears, reflective, at the hounds casting in the woods below, with old Wil's horn going like a bullock, indignant; and wink his eye at me and go with a twist of the tail jaunting over the tops. Tell me, if you will, no fox can laugh. I say you never saw that runnable fox; and there is disproof enough for you.

That fox old Wil Pandey handed to me, like the legacy of a bad debt;

and the young bitch too, like a codicil to the contrary. Words he had as well, like a last will and testament. But those I discarded, to my shame, being confident and overblown a little, wearing the waistcoat and buttons for the first time.

The runnable fox stayed runnable. Where Wil Pandey was overcome, overcome was I. And in the same place, too. For the strange thing was that the fox would take the pack to the same point in the same stream time and again. Never variation nor variety was there in his dispositions, though now he would make it five minutes sooner or five minutes later as it suited him. The same point in the same stream. And there was I, left vacant, with the hounds casting about, discoursing of the matter among themselves and approaching me for guidance and not getting it—which was bad for my good standing with them.

But if any of them outdid my own contemplations of the thing it was the young bitch. She was, in the way of a hound, devoted to that fox, maybe on instructions Wil had left her. It was she that showed her teeth widest and bayed loudest when the old fox stood against the sky, as he would in his vaunting, inciting us to go by sight rather than scent, if we cared, before he took us to the rendezvous of his vanishing. She it was that was first on his line and the fiercest in the cast and the last to come unwilling from the empty day.

Tried all ways, did I, and took no chances, never setting out with an even number of hounds and keeping the young bitch as the odd half-couple, regular. Nor did I

dispute with her if she went off on her own from some other fox we followed, for I knew she had her purposes and was after that runnable one.

Then, after some seasons, it was the end. We were brought to the same place in the same style. And I lifted my eyes and saw him, where he had always been. An old stump of a tree set in the stream and thick with ivy; and his two green eyes over his frosted muzzle looking at me, unwinking, from among the leaves. And whether the leaves were not so thick that time or whether he was old and could not climb so springingly, I do not know. But I saw from the set of his ears and the way he regarded me that he knew, and was ready to die, having earned his death and maybe more.

Now, only one hound saw what I saw, and that was the young bitch.

Hunting is a serious business and the death of foxes is desirable. There is no hound so convinced of that as a good bitch-hound. I cannot tell what was in my mind, except that if some men can die like beasts some beasts can die like men. Had the hound moved to it I and the pack would have followed. But she put down her ears and went by me with a lagging twist of her tail, as if she would leave the blame to me. A woman indeed; for it was she who persuaded me.

And so we went home, she not looking at me, nor me at her, and the rest of the pack going grumbling as if they had something in their minds as to the truth of it.

Once I turned back; and there was the old fox standing solemn on the top of a hill, watching us as he used, but this time watching us go.

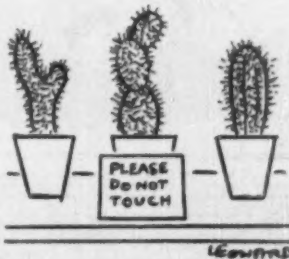
No; we never ran him again. I think he died in his earth after that, grinning maybe at his memories. . . .

The trouble with the world (said the huntsman after reflection) is that Eve was *sorry* for the Serpent.

That may cure the Serpent in time, you say? Maybe. But you will never do it with foxes.

And neither the young bitch nor me said anything of the occasion to old Wil Pandey. . . .

ALUN LLEWELLYN



ALL CHANGE

IF I had not known about the little side gite which is intended to be used only by porters with trolleys I should have missed the last Munton-on-Sea train, but luckily the gate was open and I managed to scramble into a compartment that at first appeared to be empty. The light had been switched off, and I sat down heavily on the face of somebody who had stretched himself at full length on one of the seats.

He was quite cross about it, but I pointed out that people who switched off the lights and treated compartments as private bedrooms had only themselves to blame.

He said that he found the night journey to Pierhaven extremely boring and always made a point of switching off the light and stretching himself at full length on the seat. The porter at Pierhaven had instructions to rouse him and put him out at the other end.

"I've been doing it practically every night for the last thirty years," he said, "and nobody has ever sat on my face before."

"Perhaps not," I said with a chuckle, "on the Pierhaven train. But this happens to be the eleven-fifty-five for Shockton, Bockton, Pungle Junction, Little Castaway Halt and Munton-on-Sea. It doesn't go anywhere near Pierhaven."

"Rubbish!" he said. "This is the twelve-two for Hayton, Bayton, Crigley, St. Percy Marina, Crush Ferry and Pierhaven."

"The Pierhaven train," I said, "always goes from Platform 2. This train went from Platform 9, and from time immemorial the eleven-fifty-five has gone from Platform 9."

He switched on the light and chuckled.

"You are quite right," he said, "the eleven-fifty-five usually goes from Platform 9, but there has been a certain amount of disorganization because of the fog. The man at the barrier assured me that this was the Pierhaven train."

I shook my head.

"He's wrong," I said. "I have travelled on the eleven-fifty-five at least twice a week ever since the war, and I am sure this is it. I even recognize this particular compartment by that picture of the woman in the large hat walking along the front at Brighton."

This made him a bit uneasy. He tried to reassure himself by saying that there might easily be several pictures of women in large hats walking on the front at Brighton in different trains.

"And I'm sure," he added with growing hope, "that I remember that other picture of the man with

the black moustache riding on a donkey at Hastings."

It was my turn to doubt. I could not recollect having seen the man with the black moustache before, and it was not the sort of moustache one would easily forget.

The train pulled into a station. "This will be Shockton," I said. "And I should strongly advise you to alight."

He laughed uneasily.

"It is Hayton," he said.

He peered out of one window, and I peered out of the other. Then we made a mad scramble for our bags and jumped out just as the train moved off. I knew that the eleven-fifty-five did not go via Bankington, and he knew that the twelve-two did not go via Bankington. We asked a sleepy porter what train we had really been on.

"A relief train," he said, "to Trunkham Wells. There's trouble on the line, so to-night people have to change at Trunkham Wells for Shockton, Bockton, Pungle Junction, Little Castaway Halt, Munton-on-Sea, Hayton, Bayton, Crigley, St. Percy Marina, Crush Ferry and Pierhaven." D. H. BARBER

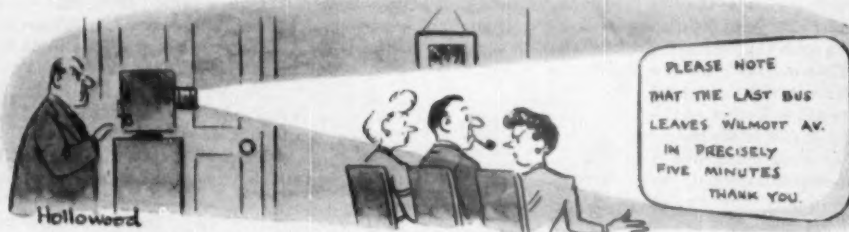
Martha

HOUSE-PROUD, she works herself to skin and bone,

A martyr, over-anxious and high-mettled,
And when she rests, what text upon the stone?

"Here, after all, a little dust has settled."

W. K. HOLMES



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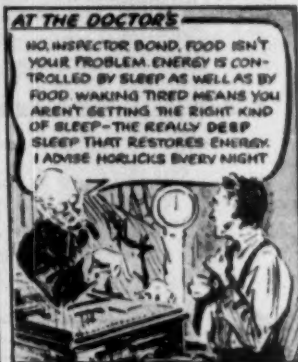
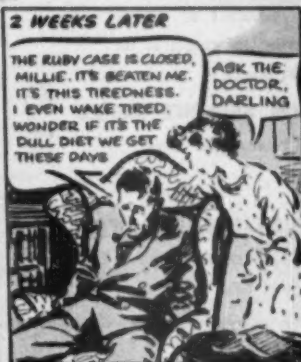
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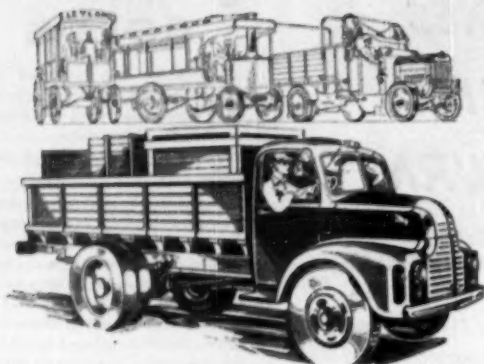
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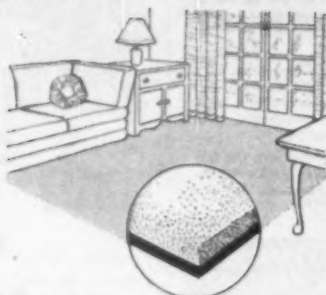
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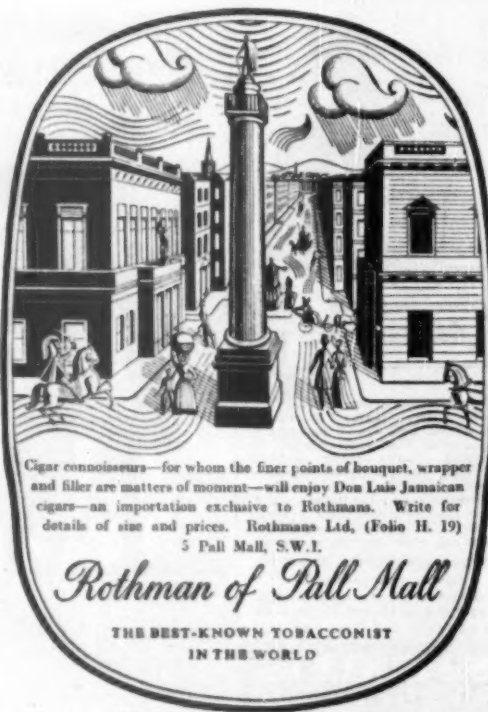
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